

AMENDMENTS

Please amend the application as indicated hereafter.

In the Claims

Please substitute the following clean copy text for the pending claims 1 - 9 of the same number. Furthermore, please add the following new claims 10 - 32.

Add B)
1. (Once Amended) In a cable data delivery network for delivering digital data to a host location upon a subscriber initiated request, apparatus for authenticating that the subscriber is authorized to use said network, said apparatus comprising:

a network manager including at least one database of authorized users and a validation agent, said validation agent further comprising:

logic to authorize the subscriber to access a first communications path by comparing first identification information with at least part of the at least one database, the first communications path providing at least a portion of connectivity between the host location and a head end of the cable data delivery network; and

logic to authorize the subscriber to access a second communications path by comparing second identification information with at least part of the at least one database, the second communications path

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providing at least a portion of connectivity between
the host location and the head end of the cable data
delivery network.

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2. (Once Amended) The apparatus of claim 1, wherein said first identification information includes a subscriber USERID.
3. (Once Amended) The apparatus of claim 2, wherein said first identification information further includes a subscriber password.
4. (Once Amended) The apparatus of claim 3, wherein said at least one database includes an associated USERID and password for each of said authorized users.
5. (Once Amended) The apparatus of claim 4, wherein said validation agent authorizes said subscriber to use said first communications path in accordance with a comparison of said subscriber USERID and said subscriber password to USERIDS and passwords stored in said at least one database.
6. (Once Amended) The apparatus of claim 5, wherein said host location includes a dial up device that further includes a cable data receiver for receiving said digital data.

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7. (Once Amended) The apparatus of claim 6, wherein said dial up device is uniquely identified by an electronic identifying number, and wherein said second identification information includes the electronic identifying number.

8. (Once Amended) The apparatus of claim 7, wherein said at least one database further includes authorized identifying numbers for each of a plurality of dial up devices including said dial up device.

9. (Once Amended) The apparatus of claim 8, wherein said validation agent authorizes said dial up device to receive said digital data over the second communications path in accordance with a comparison of said identifying number of said call up device with said identifying numbers stored in said at least one database.

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10. (Newly Added) The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the first communications path is a public switched telephone network (PSTN) link.

11. (Newly Added) The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the first communications path is bi-directional.

12. (Newly Added) The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the second communications path is a radio frequency (RF) cable link.

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13. (Newly Added) The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the second communications path is uni-directional.

(Newly Added) A method of authorizing a subscriber to access a first communications path and a second communications path, the first communications path and the second communications path utilized in conveying data between a head end and the subscriber of a cable data network, the method comprising the steps of:

authorizing the subscriber to access the first communications path by comparing first identification information with at least part of at least one database; and

authorizing the subscriber to access the second communications path by comparing second identification information with at least part of the at least one database.

15. (Newly Added) The method of claim 14, wherein the first identification information comprises a USERID and a password.

16. (Newly Added) The method of claim 14, wherein the second identification information comprises an electronic identifying number.

17. (Newly Added) The method of claim 14, wherein the first communications path is a public switched telephone network (PSTN) link.

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18. (Newly Added) The method of claim 14, wherein the first communications path is bi-directional.

19. (Newly Added) The method of claim 14, wherein the second communications path is a radio frequency (RF) cable link.

20. (Newly Added) The method of claim 14, wherein the second communications path is uni-directional.

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21. (Newly Added) An apparatus utilized in authorizing a subscriber to access a cable data network at a first level of service and a second level of service, the cable data network providing connectivity between a head end and the subscriber, the method comprising the steps of:

logic configured to authorize the subscriber to access the cable data network at the first level of service by comparing first identification information with at least part of at least one database; and

logic configured to authorize the subscriber to access the cable data network at the second level of service by comparing second identification information with at least part of the at least one database.

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22. (Newly Added) The apparatus of claim 21, wherein the first level of service is at a higher data rate than the second level of service.

23. (Newly Added) The apparatus of claim 22, wherein the first level of service operates over a bi-directional public switched telephone network (PSTN) link.

24. (Newly Added) The apparatus of claim 22, wherein the second level of service operates over a radio frequency (RF) cable link.

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25. (Newly Added) A method of authorizing a subscriber to access a cable data network at a first level of service and a second level of service, the cable data network providing connectivity between a head end and the subscriber, the method comprising the steps of:

authorizing the subscriber to access the cable data network at the first level of service by comparing first identification information with at least part of at least one database; and

authorizing the subscriber to access the cable data network at the second level of service by comparing second identification information with at least part of the at least one database.

26. (Newly Added) The method of claim 25, wherein the first level of service is at a higher data rate than the second level of service.

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27. (Newly Added) The method of claim 26, wherein the first level of service operates over a bi-directional public switched telephone network (PSTN) link.

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28. (Newly Added) The method of claim 26, wherein the second level of service operates over a radio frequency (RF) cable link.

29. (Newly Added) A method of claim logging into a cable data network that has a plurality of levels of service, the method comprising the steps of:
logging into the cable data network at a first level of service by sending first identification information to at least one validation agent; and
logging into the cable data network at a second level of service by sending second identification information to at least one validation agent.

30. (Newly Added) The method of claim 29, wherein the first level of service is at a higher data rate than the second level of service.

31. (Newly Added) The method of claim 30, wherein the first level of service operates over a bi-directional public switched telephone network (PSTN) link.

32. (Newly Added) The method of claim 30, wherein the second level of service operates over a radio frequency (RF) cable link.